

VIDEO SYNOPSIS: Susan Chrysler White

Introduction by Lauri Freking

:00 "What is art?"

How does art reach us, and when it does, what does it say? Art has the power to reveal truths and transform the way we think. It can make us see ourselves more clearly and it can pull us deeper into the rich diversity of life. Art can heal individuals and communities. But it's not just the masterpieces housed in places like the Des Moines Art Center that have this power. In this program, we'll introduce you to four Iowa artists.

Will their work have the power to move you?"

Susan Chrysler White

:50 "My work is about excess," the artist says, describing things she likes as abundance, and "a lot," and "things that are quite extreme," and she kneels down and applies a material to paper, then applies that to a large canvas, leaving paint on the canvas. She describes paint blobs, pouring paint, and "paint colliding on a sheet of paper."

1:30 She paints decals and applies them as attachments to the painting. She climbs on a ladder to do this.

1:59 The video shows a striking visual of a large painting with decals that has a blue figure in the center. She says she is interested in finding imagery and symbols that resonate with viewers who read the painting in a certain way.

"I'm engaged in the world, and I've lived in a lot of places." She says she is interested in politics, and is interested in sociology, culture, and anthropology.

2:38 Ms. White says her children were interested in math and gaming and she found herself mesmerized by the animation, and the gaming imagery. Images transform themselves through movement up and down on the screen and she began to employ these concepts in her artwork.

3:15 Ms. White talks about public commissions. She did one at an oncology department, and she interacted with people who came in daily. She found a profound relationship with the patients. She likes the provocative aspect of it, people asking her about the work. She is interested in her work having "a life outside," rather than being collected by a collector and having the work away somewhere.

3:49 This is a visual of several views of a really striking sculpture hanging from the ceiling at the oncology department she speaks of. Close-ups, and other perspectives are shown.

4:29 Ms. White is shown mixing paint on what looks like a paper plate. She talks about the space she is working in and the advantage of working on several paintings at once, there. Her method makes her feel freer, but she mentions the issue of having the several paintings seem like one work that gets "resolved" evenly from painting to painting.

5:25 Students are shown in a classroom setting. Ms. White discusses revisiting paintings, growing and knowing more. She is shown pointing things out to the students. She talks about accumulating a kind of understanding of aesthetics, the history of visual language, and being able to grow with it. She says that one hopes one's work has that. "I know that really great work that I look at over and over again has that."

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6:20 A large painting is shown in a gallery setting. She says that she hopes that the decorative element seduces you, and that as you stay with it a little bit, you begin to see the darker side of that or the more complex weave of that. It is begging you to enter, but by asking you some questions about it, she says.

A visual is shown of several paintings, and the camera closes in on the last one.

6:51 End of Susan Chrysler White section